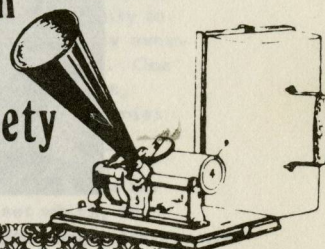
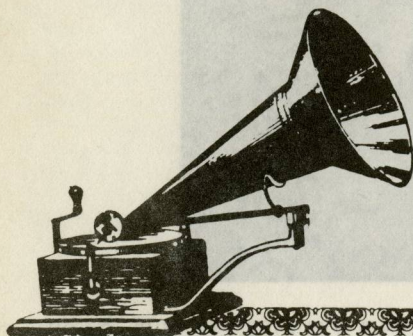


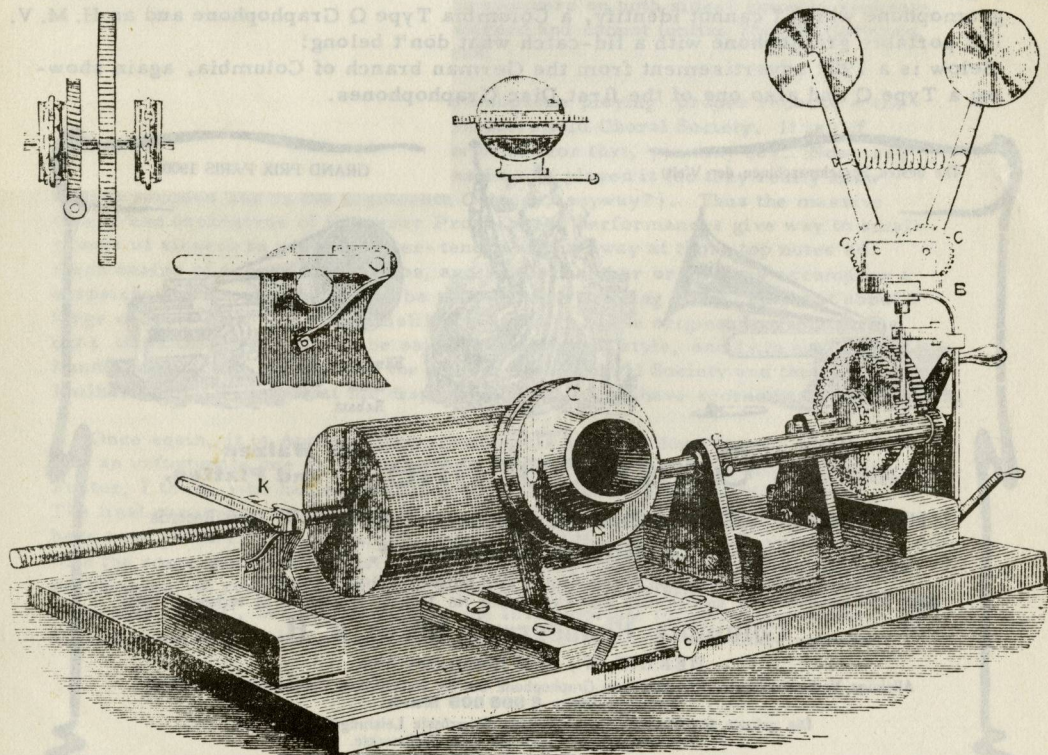
The Hillandale News

The official journal of
The City of London
Phonograph and
Gramophone Society
Inaugurated 1919

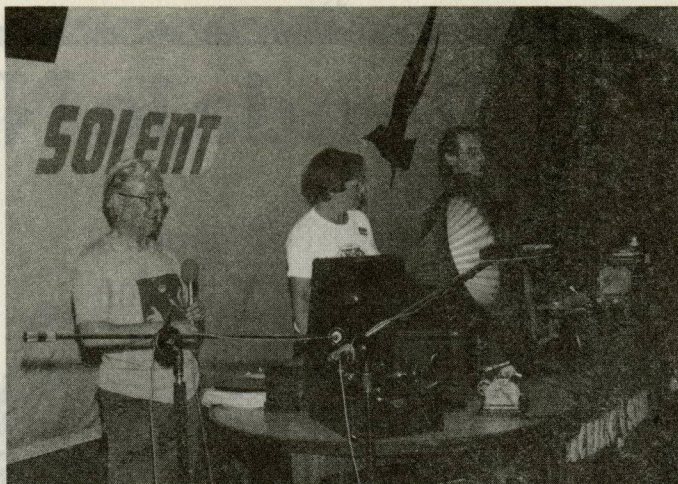


NO. 112

FEBRUARY 1980



Edison's Phonograph driven by Clockwork, with Fan-governor to equalise speed. Stroh's arrangement.

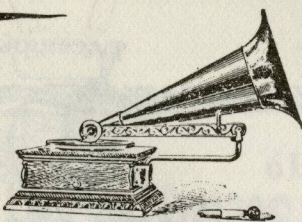

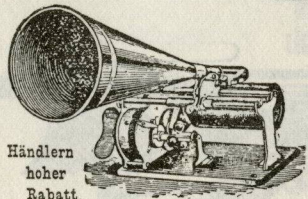


Above is a scene at the 1979 Southampton Show, with a live programme of Radio Solent's 'The 78 Show'. In the picture are Ernie Bayly (holding an orange lollipop) and Jeff Link, with their assistant, Silv, in the centre. There is also a horn gramophone which I cannot identify, a Columbia Type Q Graphophone and an H. M. V. 102 portable gramophone with a lid-catch what don't belong!

Below is a 1902 advertisement from the German branch of Columbia, again showing a Type Q and also one of the first Disc Graphophones.

Die besten Sprechmaschinen der Welt!

GRAND PRIX PARIS 1900.

Echte
amerikanische

Trade-Mark.

Händlern
hoher
Rabatt.

Graphophone

für Walzen und Platten.

!!!Weltberühmte „Columbia-Walzen“. Extra laute XP Guss-Records

„Columbia-Platten“.

Grand-Apparate und Walzen dazu in allen civilisirten Ländern patentirt.

Man versäume nicht, unseren reich illustrierten Katalog No. 1 (gratis und franco) zu verlangen.

Columbia Phonograph Co. m. b. H.

BERLIN W., Friedrichstrasse 65a.

Alleinige Verkaufsvertreter der American Graphophone Co. für Deutschland, Oesterreich u. Russland.

Kapital über 8 000 000 Mark.

Die grösste Gesellschaft dieser Branche, die grösste Leistungsfähigkeit und die vorzüglichste Waare auf dem Weltmarkte.

EDITORIAL

The Christmas and New Year Festivities will be long over ere you read this, but at the time of writing they are highly topical. I would therefore like to wish all members a happy and prosperous 1980, and may you find oodles of bargain-priced phonographs, gramophones, records, needle tins or whatever takes your fancy. I am not one of those that regards the festive season as an opportunity to drink myself silly, mainly because drunkenness seems to me to be a grossly over-rated state of health, but the period is one not without its pleasant aspects. One of these is the playing of suitable records - not carols and Christmas hymns, which never sound quite right coming out of a gramophone (although I never miss hearing them from King's College, Cambridge on the Wireless), but Messiah and the Christmas Oratorio. The latter seems not to have been sold much, if at all, in 78 form (surely someone must have recorded it before 1950?), but the l.p. version I have is a 're-processed for stereo' issue of a Vox set which, to judge from the original version which my father has, must have appeared in the early 1950s. (It is in a 78-type album, with plain cardboard 'pages': this was before the Polythene Age.) My re-processed records (which I play on a Pye Black Box, monaural but equipped with speakers on both sides) come in separate sleeves in a cardboard box: they are warped and cannot (unlike 78s) be flattened, but I can listen to them for hours on end.

Messiah I listen to on a proper gramophone playing proper records - the well-known Sargent version with the Huddersfield Choral Society. It is, of course, out of fashion now, and all the better for that, you may say. Now, say the musical pundits, we must play it as Handel played it (do they really know what it sounded like in the Eighteenth Century, anyway?). Thus the massive choirs and orchestras of Ebenezer Prout-based performances give way to small groups of singers in which counter-tenors strain away at those top notes so much easier of access to sopranos, and small chamber orchestras accompany a harpsichord; a sound that would be splendid in a drawing room, but what about a large concert hall?. I do not dislike these 'back to the original' performances, but I think there is plenty to be said for the Sargent style, and I am sure that if Handel had had the services of the Huddersfield Choral Society and the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra at his disposal, he would not have scorned to use them.

Once again, it is Apology Time: misprints are now down to me, and there was an unfortunate one on the first page of the December issue. (It was Vivian Foster, I think, who had a newspaper editor's son marrying a Miss Print). The final paragraph was headed 'From the Membership Secretary:' this should have read 'MEETINGS' Secretary, but somehow the fact that both words start with the same two letters must have confused my addle-pated brain. The paragraph came, of course, from Dave Roberts, and was originally headed 'Vice-Chairman's Chat', but that seemed to me inappropriate for various reasons. My apologies not only to him, but also to the Hon. Secretary, who deals with the

membership records. Talking of which, don't forget to renew your subscription (send it to the Treasurer) if you have not already done so: all subscriptions expire on February 29th, and this issue of the magazine is therefore the last one of the current subscription year.

VICE-CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Well, the first thing I must do after reading the December issue is to marvel at the fact that the whole magazine was typed by one person, and if I had tried the same feat myself it would have taken me three weeks without any sleep to complete it. The Editor must be congratulated on turning out a first class issue. It would be nice to know that he was able to recruit some assistance for the February and subsequent issues. The problem, of course, is that the only suitable typewriter is at The Hoo in Meopham.

Now on to my own efforts in the literary field: I am at the moment knee-deep in references in the preparation of the Indices to back issues of 'Hillandale'. This is a task that is long overdue, and I hope that I will be able to issue indices from Volume 61 to 90 by the time the February magazine is issued. Details of how to get copies will be given in the Reprint Catalogue.

Volumes 1 and 2 of the Edison 2-minute cylinder listings will soon be available again. (These were B51 and B52). You will then be able to get all the listings of Edison cylinders as compiled by Sydney H. Carter, with up-to-date corrections and additions as appropriate. Please do not order these items yet as they are still on the typewriter. Watch the Reprint Catalogue for details.

MEETINGS

There are two very important changes to our London programmes:

MARCH: For this month, we will be welcoming Ernest Lough to the Bloomsbury Institute to recall his recording career, including, no doubt, reference to 'Hear My Prayer'.

APRIL: Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume, of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, will be giving a talk on the general theme 'Music without Horns'. Those who heard Mr. Ord Hume at the Jubilee Dinner last year will know his skill as a speaker. He edits the Musical Box Society's magazine, 'The Music Box', and has written a number of standard works on mechanical music.

The dates are March 18th Ernest Lough

April 22nd Arthur Ord Hume.

These are programmes not to be missed, so adjust your diary to fit them in. The President and Len Watts will be giving their programmes later in the year - the new dates have yet to be announced.

CAVAN O'CONNOR

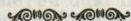
Report of the December 5th Meeting at the Bloomsbury Institute.

This was a first class show and worthy of a much larger audience than attended. The first part of the programme was given over to music recorded by Mr. O'Connor under several pseudonyms on several record labels. The first recordings we heard were sung under his own name on Vocalion, with a couple of items from Gilbert and Sullivan. We then heard one on an 8-inch Broadcast which was attributed to 'Solo with orchestra', and we heard items from The Gondoliers. Between the records Mr. O'Connor told us details of his recording contracts and why he recorded under so many names. At interval time we enjoyed some Christmas cake with our tea and we were able to purchase copies of long players with dubbings of original recordings covering many years of Mr. O'Connor's career.

The second part of the programme began with an 'off the record' recital by Mr. O'Connor accompanied by Mrs. O'Connor at the piano. He proved that he can still sing extremely well, in spite of his advancing years. He sang four songs, of which the last was his signature tune, Goodnight, which he described as his 'meal-ticket'. This time it was far from Goodnight, for we carried on to hear more of his recordings (something of an anti-climax after the real thing). A Little Bit of Heaven was heard on one of the l.p.'s and, after a couple more and a few anecdotes we finished with In the Still of the Night.

We must not overlook the assistance that was given by John McKeown, who liaised with Mr. O'Connor in the preparation and the introduction of the programme. We also had the use of the new turntables, which have now been completed. They are quite sophisticated and more complex than Christopher's portables or my Edison Fireside to set up. We must thank Len Watts and Denis Harbour for completing this equipment, and Len for operating it on this occasion. The meeting was closed on a high note when the Chairman, who was unable to attend the first part of the programme, asked Mr. O'Connor to become an Honorary Member of our Society, which he readily accepted.

D.R.R.



A TOUCH OF GENIUS

This is the title of a current series on what used to be called the Home Service, which is presented by Robin Ray and goes out on Sundays at midday. The subject is great musicians, illustrated with recordings. The most recent programme in the series covered the life of Enrico Caruso, and it was interesting to hear an account which was not compiled by a record collector or a historian of sound recording. Thus there was nothing about Fred Gaisberg (who might, from gramophone-oriented accounts, be thought to have 'discovered' Caruso), and although a number of records were played, including old favourites like M'Appari and Vesti la Giubba, the only reference to Caruso's recording career was the statement that, seventy-five years ago, he signed an exclusive contract with 'RCA Records', an anachronism which would have been prevented by the old B.B.C. rules on advertising.

C.P.

THE FIRST WAX CYLINDERS IN BRITAIN Frank Andrews

It appears that the first 'public' recital of pre-recorded wax cylinders was given on August 14th 1888 at Little Menlo in Upper Norwood, Surrey (the home of Colonel George Gouraud, Edison's personal representative for Europe). Before enlarging on this event, I think it might be as well to recount the previous sequence of events in the art of recording and reproducing sound, as I understand them from the most recent research. As to the recital itself, I am indebted to Mrs. Leah Burt, of the Edison National Historic Site at West Orange, who kindly sent me some relevant press cuttings. These were passed over to Edison in the U.S.A. by Gouraud, who staged the recital in front of an invited audience which included scientists and many representatives of the national and provincial press.

ORIGINS

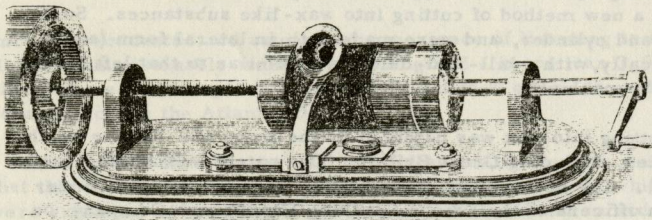
In the spring of 1877 Charles du Cros was the first to propose a means of recording sound so that it could be reproduced at will from a permanent record. His process was to consist of photo-engraving a recorded trace, the method of making which was already known to science through the Phonautograph, invented twenty years earlier by Leon Scott, a Frenchman of Irish descent.

Cros' first records were to be in the form of discs, carrying either a groove or a raised spiral ridge, the movement of a stylus with a point or a forked tip giving the movement to the diaphragm and thus creating sounds. A cylindrical record was also envisaged by Cros. In spite of continual endeavours, he failed to have a working model of a machine made, and he was never able to put his invention to the test.

Had Cros enjoyed the facilities and reputation of Edison, already a world-recognised inventor, he might have had machines and recordings demonstrating his process by the end of 1877, but it was not to be. Edison, working on recording and repeating devices for the telegraph and telephone in his laboratory, later in the year 'stumbled across' another method of recording sound which, after a period of experiment and development, resulted in a method of displacing the surface of tin foil by an indenting point. The recorded track represented a hill-and-dale configuration. The foil was either wrapped around a metal cylinder or, less commonly, covered a disc turntable. The indented tracks imparted either an in-and-out or an up-and-down vibratory movement, depending on the position of the diaphragm in relation to the recording (? - Ed.). Edison's method of indenting tin foil was not only successfully demonstrated as a method of recording and reproducing sound, but it served as the basis upon which the world's first recording and reproducing machines were constructed in many countries.

There was no invention in the phonograph itself, as a machine. As a mechanical contrivance it used well-known and simple mechanical principles, closely allied to a simple screw-cutting lathe. The real invention was the process of recording and reproducing sound, of which the machine was really the means. As J.E. Hough (of Edison Bell fame) remarked in later years, there never was a patent taken out for a phonograph, only for a method of recording sound and reproducing it.

Edison assigned his rights in his invention to the Edison Speaking Phonograph



Disc tin foil phono-
graph (taken from the
Count du Moncel's
book The Telephone,
the Microphone & the
Phonograph, 1879).

(Above): An early tin foil phonograph
(Below): Magnified view of phonographic
tracings of the letters R and S
(from Good Words for 1879)

R 000 000 000 000 000 000

S 000 000 000 000 000 000

+++++

Company, which was formed in America: profits were expected to come from the demonstration and possible sale of machines. Unfortunately, only experts could achieve reasonable results with Edison Speaking Phonographs and recordings were usually damaged when unwrapped from the mandrel. Although far-ranging and comprehensive Letters Patent were granted on the invention in Great Britain (not in the U.S.A.), the recording process proved to be unpractical for general use and the business in the Edison phonograph diminished and gradually became a forgotten 'Wonder of the World'.

Edison failed to improve his invention, and the idea lay neglected for a number of years. A tin foil phonograph gathered dust in his laboratory. His British patents were allowed to lapse, and many amateur constructors began building their own machines in England.

Cros had already given up his attempts to demonstrate the viability of his process, and now Edison had given up his unsuitable method of indenting tin foil, although he had proved beyond any doubt that the recording and reproducing of sound was a feasible commercial proposition if only a more successful process could be found. The Edison Phonograph had, paradoxically, succeeded and failed at the same time, as far as its commercial possibilities were concerned, and it was commercially successful inventions which were the business of the Edison Laboratory.

DEVELOPMENTS

Alexander Graham Bell, who has often been described as the inventor of the telephone, was, with Charles Sumner Tainter and Chichester Alexander Bell, well

acquainted with Edison's tin foil phonograph. They studied what Edison had achieved and, with the use of a phonograph and other apparatus they had, by 1882, successfully made recordings by a new method of cutting into wax-like substances. Such recordings were on disc and cylinder, and were made both in lateral form (as in Cros' process) and vertically, with a hill-and-dale track similar to that left by the indenting style on Edison's machines.

The new method of cutting into wax was patented by the Bells and Tainter in the U.S.A. and other countries, including Great Britain. (The patent was applied for in 1885 and granted in 1886). The new method of recording had been offered, under certain terms, to certain officers of the Edison Speaking Phonograph Company on more than one occasion, but nothing resulted from this. Edison, as far as I am aware, had not produced a successful wax cut recording, although he had attempted to indent wax: some of his first experiments were on waxed paper strips, but he found that wax was removed and blocked the indenting style, and so the wax was covered with tin foil, as his British patent claims made clear.

The Bells and Tainter had designated their various experimental machines as 'Graphophones'. The Graphophone that went into production in 1887 used wax-coated cardboard cylinders.

With the knowledge that a new type of talking machine was being put on the market Edison turned once more to his tin foil phonograph in order to try and improve it, well aware that the wax-cutting method was protected by Letters Patent. Public announcements in the press proclaimed that his improved machines would be based on his old indentation process: however, when the new Edison Perfected Phonograph was announced, it was clearly seen to be using a wax-incision system which openly infringed the Bell-Tainter patents. Graphophones were already in production and were being used as dictating machines.

In physical appearance, the Perfected Phonograph was quite distinguishable from the Graphophone, and used a cylinder record made of a wax-like substance throughout, with a taper bore to suit the metal mandrel of the phonograph. This was the state of the art when Gouraud received his first Perfected Edison Phonograph at Little Menlo.

THE PHONOGRAPH IN LONDON

Colonel Gouraud received the Edison Perfected Phonograph at Little Menlo at 2 o'clock on June 26th 1888. In a letter to the press he wrote:-

'At two o'clock this afternoon, at the address below, I had the honour to receive from Mr. Edison his "Perfected Phonograph" which, on the authority of Mr. Edison's own statement in his familiar voice, communicated to me by the phonograph itself, is the first instrument of his latest model that has been seen outside his laboratory or has left his hands and is, consequently, the first to reach this country.

'At five minutes past two o'clock precisely I and my family were enjoying the at

once unprecedented and astounding experience of listening to Mr. Edison's own familiar and unmistakable tones here in England - more than 3,000 miles from the place where he had spoken and exactly ten days after, the voice having meanwhile voyaged across the Atlantic Ocean.

'His "First Phonogram" as Mr. Edison calls it, tells me, among other things, that this instrument contains many modifications of those which, a few weeks ago, were exhibited at the Electrical Club in New York and so widely reported in the press.

'In the several long phonogramic communications to me (no single word of which had to be repeated in order to be clearly and easily understood by every person present, including a child of seven years old) Mr. Edison mentions that he will send me phonograms by every mail leaving New York, and requests me to correspond with him exclusively through the medium of the phonograph, humorously remarking, in this connection, upon the advantages he will himself derive from the substitution of phonograms for a style of writing not always too legible.

'Next to the phonogram from Mr. Edison himself, and before another of the interesting contents of the "phonogramic cabinet" sent me, is an exquisite poem entitled "The Phonograph's Salutation", composed by the well-known and gifted American poet and preacher The Rev. Horation Nelson Powers, D.D., of Piermont, on the Hudson. This makes the phonograph tell its own story of what it is and what it does, in a style and with a power that must add not a little to the already high reputation of its author. It was spoken by him into the phonograph, so that we cannot fail to read it as he would have it read - a privilege of no small importance to both the poet and to those who hear him.

'Perhaps the highest justification of the phonograph's description of its own power in its "Salutation" is found in the fact that to several members of my family who are familiar with the Rev. Doctor's style of oratory, from having sat under his preaching in former years, the voice of the author is perfectly recognisable, even by my youngest child of seven years, who had not heard the voice since he was five years old.

'Besides the above, Mr. Edison has sent for our amusement numerous musical records of great interest and beauty: pianoforte, cornet and other instruments, solos duets &c., many of which, he tells me, have frequently been repeated, some several hundred times.

'Altogether our experiences of the day have been so delightful and unusual, not to say supernatural, that it makes it difficult to realise that we have not been dreaming; so interesting withal as to make it seem a duty, as it is a pleasure, to communicate the above to your widely read paper, which I have so frequently observed to chronicle the works of the author of this unparalleled triumph of mind over matter. All honour to Edison!

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant, G.E. Gouraud. '

To put the arrival of the Perfected Phonograph into perspective, six weeks later the Mechanical World, of London, could print under the heading 'The Graphophone' that 'From Mr. Tainter we learn that the commercial Graphophone was completed last summer and put into the hands of the manufacturers last fall. . . . Graphophones are used in Washington in both houses of Congress for work in reporting the proceedings, and also by members for the dictating of their correspondence. . . . The Graphophone has been put into the hands of Mr. Henry Edmunds (of the firm of W. T. Glover & Co.) for this country. He is bringing some Graphophones home with him and will probably read a paper on the subject at the British Association Meeting at Bath.'

Three days after Gouraud had written his letter, the Pall Mall Gazette published a few sketches of Edison's new phonograph, showing the wet battery, the machine itself with hearing tube, a box of cylinders and a few other items, the result of a visit to Gouraud's house by a Gazette reporter. 'Personally I was staggered by the loudness and the tunefulness of the band which played to me, by the resonance of the cornet, and the distinctness of the pianoforte. They might have been in the next room. Edison's voice is not pleasant, as he is deaf, and talked very loud messages. The funniest thing was the baby tube (cylinder - Ed.), which cried too naturally' - 29-6-1888.

A postscript to Gouraud's letter had said 'It may be interesting to add that the above communication was spoken by me into the phonograph and written from the phonograph dictation by a member of my family who had, of course, no previous experience of the instrument.' The letter appeared in many newspapers throughout the kingdom, and aroused such interest and so many enquiries, that Gouraud felt it necessary to write to the press again. This letter was published in the Bristol Times, among others.

In it, Gouraud explained why the phonograph in his possession could not at once be publicly exhibited, as was so widely desired and as he himself would have been only too glad to permit. Edison's object in sending him the phonograph was to permit experiments to determine the best form in which the phonograms (the cylinders) and the phonogram envelopes should be produced for mailing purposes. To this end, he had received materials and implements in great variety through Mr. Hamilton, who brought the machine across from America. Gouraud then recounted Edison's own words on the subject, quoting the 'First Phonogram', and allowing the press to make as much use of it as they pleased:

'Ahem! In my laboratory, Orange, New Jersey, June the 16th., 1888, three o'clock a.m. Friend Gouraud, ahem, this is my first mailing phonogram. It will go to you in the regular United States mail from New York, via Southampton, North German Lloyd Steamer Eider. I send you, by Mr. Hamilton, a new phonograph, the first one of the new model that has left my hands.

'It has been put together very hurriedly and is not finished, as you will see. I have sent you a quantity of experimental phonogram blanks so you can talk back to me. I will send you phonograms of talk and music, by every mail leaving here, until

we get on the best thing for the purpose of mailing.

'Mrs. Edison and the baby are doing well. The baby's articulation is quite loud enough but a trifle indistinct; it can be improved a bit, it is not bad for a first experiment.

'With kind regards, Yours, Edison.

To Colonel George Edward Gouraud, Little Menlo, Beulah Hill, Upper Norwood, Surrey, England.

Postscript:

'I should like you to keep private the details as to the construction of the phonograph, i. e., the new points, until I get my patents.

'Send me some good music from England.

'I hope you will talk to me by every mail. I shall be glad to be spared the labour of reading your writing. Phonograms from you instead of letters will be a Godsend.'

In this letter, Gouraud let it be known that he expected several instruments to reach England in a few weeks, when they would at once be placed at the disposal of the press, and then the scientific and learned societies. He also pointed out that the existing single phonograph was not 'adapted to a numerous company', but offered in the meantime to allow any accredited representative of the press an opportunity of an oral examination by prior appointment. (How is a phonograph examined orally? - Ed.)

Between Gouraud's two letters, a comprehensive article on the Perfected Phonograph appeared in Family Circle, in which three illustrations appeared, showing respectively dictation into a phonograph, transcription from one (by a female typist) and the phonograph itself. The latter was quite different to the sketch in the Pall Mall Gazette published the day before. The new illustration showed the 'spectacle' device for recorder and reproducer (See Frow and Sefl, The Edison Cylinder Phonographs, p. 4). (C.f. the two photographs on the next page - Ed.)

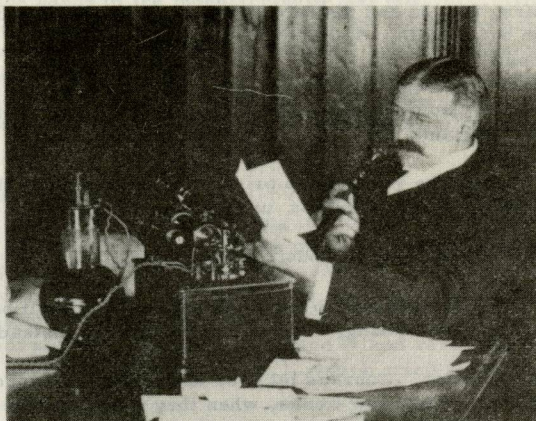
TALKING DOLL

On the same day (June 30th 1888) an article appeared in The Queen entitled 'Mr. Edison's Talking Doll': 'Mr. Edison has invented a wax doll that talks. The jaws are hung so naturally that one unacquainted with the fictitious character of the doll would imagine that they belong to a genuine flesh-and-blood infant. The body of the doll contains a miniature motor and the smallest phonograph ever made. The phonograph and the jaws of the doll are worked simultaneously, and the fictitious infant talks for just one minute by Mr. Edison's golden chronometer. It is so accurately timed that the homely little prayer which John Quincey Adams uttered while dying - "Now I lay me down to sleep"- has just time to issue from its ruby lips before the instrument stops. Explaining how this remarkable feat is performed Mr. Edison says:

"A curious feature about this invention is that the baby's voice is an exact representation of the human voice. In fact, it is my own voice, for I speak to the phonograph

This photograph shows Colonel Gouraud speaking into his Perfected Phonograph.

The picture was reputedly taken while he was dictating his first letter to Edison; presumably, the reply to the 'First phonogram'.



Here we see a letter being transcribed by hand, with a period touch in the quill pen. A companion photograph, with the same screen in the background, has a 'lady typewriter' performing the same task in a more up-to-date manner.



and the record is made of the tones of my voice upon the little waxen cylinder. Then, by an ingenious contrivance connected with one of the arms of the make-believe baby, the mechanism is started into motion. It sounds all the more natural coming from the baby because the tones of my voice have been reduced in volume so that they seem suited to the infant's capacity. The accurate gauging of the utterances of the doll, so that they would come within the one minute limit, has cost me a great deal of time and labour. The first line of the prayer is repeated more quickly than any of the others. The second line is a little slower and runs something like the following: 'I pray the L-o-r-d m-y soul to k-e-e-p'. The third line is still slower and, when printed, would read something like this: 'If I should d-i-e b-e-f-o-r-e I w-a-k-e.' The last line of the original verse is long drawn out, as if the make-believe baby was getting very sleepy, thus: 'I p-r-a-y t-h-e L-o-r-d m-y s-o-u-l t-o t-a-k-e'.

'But I have added,' continued Mr. Edison, 'a few words to the prayer which, while they do not appear in the original, still will be found in general use. They are these lines, and they die away from the infant's lips as though she were utterly overcome with weariness: "G-o-o-d n-n-i-g-h-t M-a-a-m-a, G-o-o-d n-n-i-g-h-t P-p-p-a-a-p-a G-o-o-o-d n-i-i-i-g-h-t."

'This is not the only accomplishment of this wonderful child,' continued the inventor, with a smile: 'Not only does this spurious baby speak its prayer, but it also sings a comic song. When I had Mr. Rosenfeld play over his song, Kutchy, Kutchy Koo, for the phonograph, I also took an impression of the melody and words for the use of my baby, so that now she not only says her evening prayer but she also sings her little song - singing the chorus only - as follows: "Kutchy, Kutchy Koo, Lovey me, I lovey 'oo; Does 'oo lovey lovey me, As I lovey, lovey 'ee? Kutchy, Kutchy Koo!" My little maiden never has a sore throat, and she never refuses to sing when called upon to do so.'" (Brief pause while readers vomit over the side! - Ed.)

Neither the Perfected Phonograph nor the speaking doll were in production at that time: they were products of the Edison Laboratory. Nevertheless, Edison's reported description of arranging and recording the doll's phonograms seems to place him as the first in a long line of 'musical directors' attached to talking machine companies, whose responsibility it was to arrange pieces to fit recording times, to orchestrate pieces in the most suitable manner for recording purposes and to see that the performers carried out the arrangements while recording.

If the Perfected Phonographs were yet to go into production, the Bell-Tainter Graphophones were already available, and the relevant U.S.A. patents had also become a commodity; they had first been acquired by the Volta Graphophone Company, and then by the American Graphophone Company (which later produced the first Columbia products). The fundamental patents were at that time the most vital asset of a company in this business, although Gouraud and contemporary commentators completely ignored the fact that the American Graphophone Co. now owned the wax-cutting patent for recording, when referring to the Edison Perfected Phonograph and speaking doll.

(To be concluded)

PEOPLE, PAPER AND THINGS

by George Frow

Now that Christmas - that well-known Time of Giving - is just over, may I take this opportunity of thanking all members and non-members who have sent those of us who run the Society cards and messages of goodwill. Some of these come from members in the outbacks of the world who have no chance of ever getting a reply, because we haven't all got membership lists, but their most kind thoughts are appreciated.

A member has kindly sent me a photostat of a newspaper advertisement of April 1915 for the Grand Cinema, Wavertree, Liverpool, which was featuring Edison's Kinetophone talking pictures for a week. This is the first reference to this system of talking pictures that I recall seeing outside America - and in the middle of the U-boat war too. This indicates that there may be some over-size phonographs lurking somewhere that nobody has told us about. In any case the Edison Site would like to hear about surviving Kinetophone film or cylinders, as they have several without the other - if you know what I mean.

Having mentioned Edison once, I will mention him again, because in November the B. B. C. television gave another showing of the Spencer Tracy film Edison the Man, which seemed as good a way as any for passing a wet afternoon. It has worn well for its nearly forty years, and makes a genuine effort to stay as close to history as a well-tucked-in story allows. Spencer Tracy had the advantage of looking like T. A. E. at all ages and stages, though I thought he spoke too fast for the part when it showed him as an old man. For some reason all T. A. E. 's assistants in the laboratory were re-christened - one feels that Batchelor, Ott, Upton and Kruesi were not too impossible for a film - and a dry-comic character was inserted for the dry-comic Lynne Overman. Gene Lockhart appeared in a Jay Gould characterisation, and it is of interest that Gene and Kathleen Lockhart used to act in playlets staged at Edison conventions of salesmen and the trade for pushing the Company products. The low matchboard ceilings of the original Menlo Park laboratory building forced M. G. M. to build sets with ceilings, which was an innovation also noticeable in Citizen Kane in the same year (1940). Finally, did you realise that Edison's first tin-foil machine was a long-mandrel model with a flywheel on the end? Probably that was the best that the late Norman Spieden, who oversaw the film, could find for M. G. M. The scenes showing the starting of the Pearl Street jumbo dynamos were very well done indeed, and remind us that 1979 was the centenary year of the Edison electric light. If the newer generations of Society members have an opportunity to see Edison the Man, it may be recommended as a worthwhile film that shows some of the principal milestones of Edison's life in a not too romanticised or idealised fashion.

The other day I was looking at an Edison (large mandrel) Concert phonograph in the new-style case with banner transfer, which put it at about 1902 to 1906,

but the top casting was different, being more curvaceous than usual when viewed from above. The odd thing about the Triton type of motor too was that the governor, instead of running parallel to the train of gear shafts, was set at right angles and across the body of the machine. It's not unusual to find Edison phonographs with sections left out of the top casting, to give lightness perhaps, but this is a variant not known to the writer. It could be that late Concert machines were fashioned in this way, as their lines tended to be a bit straight, solid and uninteresting, and perhaps other members may have something to say about this sort of thing.

A link between today and the late Col. Gouraud, Edison's agent in London around the 1880s, has been lost with the death of Charles Cox at the age of 98 after a fall at home. Employed by Col. Gouraud in early phonograph and gramophone experiments around the turn of the century, Charles Cox told his story in Hillandales Nos. 44 and 95 et al., since when he has always been sent a copy every other month.

The death was also reported in November of the cornettist Jack Mackintosh, whose 78s, in particular 50-year-old Regals, will be known to all who look through record heaps, and I hope some of them in good condition are played and enjoyed by the membership. At 88 when he died, Mackintosh came from humble beginnings in Sunderland to become the outstanding British cornet player of his generation, turning to the trumpet on joining the B. B. C. Symphony Orchestra. He belonged to a lost generation of cornet players who not only had marvellous expertise as masters of their instruments, but, as will be remembered through his records, was also always the producer of a lovely tone. So often tone is lost to exhibitionism and tonguing display. As a rule, his ten-inchers appeared on the Regal or Regal-Zonophone labels, his twelve-inchers on Columbia, and he made duets with Harry Mortimer.

Although unfortunately the Society has no branch going in the populous North-East of Britain, there are always hopes that someone will roll up sleeves and get one under way, but until that day dawns, there is a Clockwork Music Group centred on the Joicey Museum, City Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. In a programme sent to me by Phil Bailey [redacted] Newcastle, NE16 4ES) there seem to be six meetings a year at present, and these include evenings on records, talking machines, musical boxes and music hall on film.

Lastly, if anyone knows if a list has ever been made of cylinders issued by the Lambert Brothers of Chicago, would they please let me know. These, of course, were the first standard indestructible 2-minute cylinders, are usually pink, and I believe they appeared in Concert size. It may well be that they have been listed in a journal already, but could well have passed me by when I was cleaning my glasses.

PHONOFAIR 1980

Each year it is proposed to hold a 'Phonofair' at one of the regional sections in turn. This year the honour falls to the Hereford Branch, and the date is June 14th (a Saturday) at Malvern in Worcestershire. A reasonably large hall will be hired for the event with adequate parking nearby.

Provisionally the programme will be as follows:

1.00 p.m. to 4.00p.m. - A bring, buy and exchange of gramophones, phonographs and related materials. Tables will be available, for which those intending to bring a fair amount of material should make application in advance to Mike Field. For small 'lots' (e.g. a single phonograph or just a few records), no prior notice is required, as there will be adequate room in the hall. The latter will be open from 11.00 a.m. to allow stalls to be set up, but no business will be permitted until the doors open officially at 1.00, to give all members a fair chance to find that elusive item.

A separate part of the hall will be used to hold a competition to find the 'Best' gramophone and phonograph. The definition of 'Best' has yet to be decided, but could perhaps be, in the judges' opinion, the best condition, the most collectible or the most skilfully restored. The prizes will be a quarter-scale model of a 'Dog' Gramophone and a Gem in solid brass; these will be held by the winners for one year. More details will be available in due course. We are hoping that everyone will bring their favourite machines and make a sparkling display.

4.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. - Sales tables will be cleared away while refreshments are being served. Food and drink will be charged for on a no-profit basis. The machine display will be arranged for the next part of the proceedings.

5.00p.m. - The results of the competitions will be announced and the winners presented with their trophies. This will be followed by a half-hour programme of 5-inch cylinders played on various machines. The selection will not rate as musically significant, but the machines will be briefly described and compared. After an interval with time for discussion another half-hour programme of more musical content will be presented by one of our more knowledgeable members.

A method of playing cylinders electrically will conclude the demonstrations. It is expected that the day will finish at about 7.00

in the evening, but the local hostelrys will be ideal places to continue discussions, or the opportunity may be taken to view local members' collections.

It is sincerely hoped that members will make every effort to attend this event, which could be the highlight of the Talking Machine Calendar. It will be an opportunity to meet fellow enthusiasts, including, we hope, some from the Continent, and also to buy a little, sell a little, see a few machines and judge the quality of music and machines. If it is a nice day, you may even think of coming early to enjoy a walk in the Malvern Hills.

Enquiries to:

Mike Field,

or

Don Watson,

Malvern

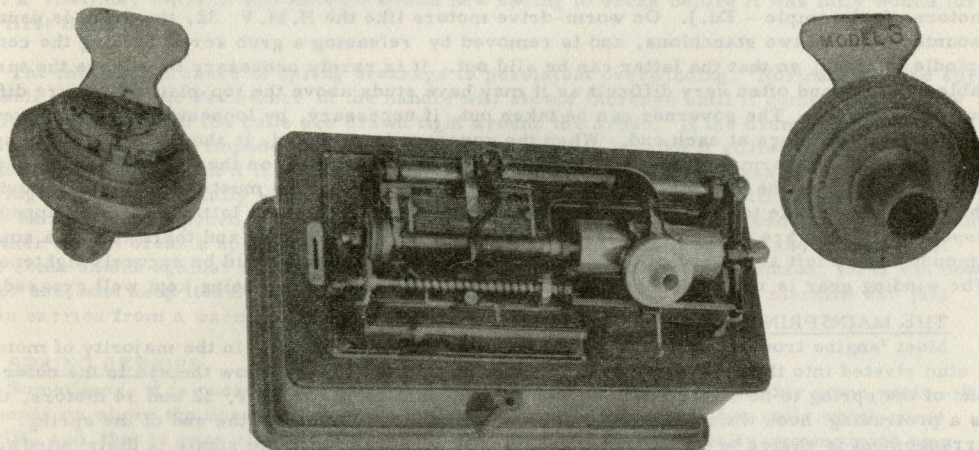
Worcestershire

Tel. 0886 32107

Tupsley

Hereford

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In the centre is an Edison Home fitted with a Model S reproducer and a Model D repeating device. The latter consists of the coarse-pitch screw at the front of the machine, driven by an extra gear on the mandrel pulley and with a collar at the right hand end on the left-hand face of which is a projecting pin, and the arm attached to the carriage. At the end of the record, the pointed end of the hinged piece at the front of the arm is pushed by the revolving pin up on to the repeating screw, at the same time raising the reproducer and feed-nut. The repeating screw moves the whole carriage back to the start, where the arm is disengaged by contact with the adjustable rod seen under the screw. The side views are of the Model S reproducer, similar to the R but with a K-type twin-stylus arrangement. It was introduced in November 1911, but was not generally available in Great Britain. Like the R, it has a 42mm. diaphragm, but fits a C or K size arm. This one was seen at the August 1979 meeting. - Dave Roberts.

The Body & Soul of the Gramophone

Part 11: The Driving Force

by Jim Goodall

Gramophone motors were made in such a variety of styles that it is impossible to describe them all here, but most were constructed on similar lines. The mechanism is simple and normally consists of a drum containing a coiled spring, the outer end of which is hitched over a stud or hook on the inside of the drum, while the inner end engages a stud or slot on the driving spindle or arbor. The driving, or 'great', wheel may constitute one side of the drum, or may be separate and driven from the arbor. The great wheel engages a pinion on the arbor of an intermediate wheel which in turn meshes with a pinion on the turntable spindle. A wider gear on this spindle engages the pinion or worm on the governor spindle. The governor has a set of weights mounted on springs which are attached at one end to a sliding disc: this is pulled up against a friction pad of felt or leather as increasing speed causes the weights to spin in a widening circle. Some motors, including many by H. M. V., have no intermediate wheel: instead, the great wheel meshes directly with a worm on the turntable spindle.

With motors of the pillar-and-plate type, dismantling normally starts by removing the bottom plate, which allows the spring drum and intermediate wheel to be lifted out (sometimes the spring can be removed without detaching the bottom plate, as in the H. M. V. 59 and 69 motors, for example - Ed.). On worm-drive motors like the H. M. V. 32, the drum is usually mounted between two stanchions, and is removed by releasing a grub screw holding the centre spindle in place, so that the latter can be slid out. It is rarely necessary to remove the turntable spindle, and often very difficult as it may have studs above the top-plate which are difficult to punch out. The governor can be taken out, if necessary, by loosening the grub screws securing the bearings at each end. When the governor is replaced, it should be carefully adjusted so that its worm or pinion meshes correctly with the wheel on the turntable spindle: this is done by turning the bearings, which are usually eccentric. One must guard against moving the governor spindle too far away from the wheel, or the teeth of the latter may be stripped, especially if they are of fibre. Once the mesh is correctly adjusted and there is just a small amount of play left at the end of the spindle, the bearing screws should be securely tightened. The winding gear is robust and seldom needs touching, apart from being kept well greased.

THE MAINSPRING.

Most 'engine trouble' in gramophones involves the mainspring. In the majority of motors, a stud riveted into the side of the drum protrudes on the inside to allow the eye in the outer end of the spring to be slipped over it. In others, such as the H. M. V. 32 and 34 motors, there is a protruding hook which engages a corresponding hook formed at the end of the spring. This arrangement is easier to fix, and is mechanically stronger since the strain is distributed across the full width of the spring. With eye-ended springs, the eye will often not catch properly unless the end of the spring is bent so that the narrow sides of the eye can slide under the flange of the stud when the spring is fitted to the drum. Otherwise, when you wind it up, the spring will come adrift. In many late models of good quality, the inner end of the spring is moulded to form a sharp ridge which slides into a groove cut in the arbor. This is known as a 'hub centre', and is much stronger and more reliable than the stud-and-eye method.

Spring drums are sealed in a number of ways. In some cheap motors, the cover consists of a tightly fitting lid, sometimes contracted on. With the centre spindle removed or the drum lifted off it, the lid has to be hammered off; that is, by knocking it off with a series of glancing blows under the lip. If there is any corrosion, the application of easing oil may help if it is left to penetrate, but if this does not work, one can write the thing off as 'caput'. In some motors, the lid is secured by screws to a flange, the lid often being the great wheel. On most H. M. V. motors of the 1920s and later, the lid is held by a circlip in a shallow groove round

the top of the drum. This is easily prised out with a screwdriver, and the lid can then be lifted off. The circlip is not always easy to put back as it is a very tight fit.

In the H. M. V. No. 32 motors, both hook-ended springs are housed in the same drum: this opens at one end, the springs being wound in opposite directions and separated by a perforated metal plate. In other multiple spring motors, the springs may be mounted each in a separate drum, with a common spindle inside hollow arbors which connect the springs in series. Each arbor is connected to the drum of one spring and the centre of the next spring.

Springs vary in length from about eight feet to twenty-five feet, and in width from five eighths to two inches. For a drum of given diameter, a certain length of spring is required to give the longest playing time. If there is too much spring in the drum, there is insufficient space in which to expand. The width must be exactly right: if the spring is too wide, it will either not allow the lid to fit, or will be in contact with it and not be free to wind or unwind, while too narrow a spring will not wind up straight, and may not have enough power to drive the motor.

During my early days, I once asked a shop assistant if springs had any guarantee, and he said it was impossible to detect every slight flaw there might be, and so there was no way of knowing how long a spring might last, even with careful use. Some springs, he said, may last a lifetime, while he had known a brand new spring to break before it was fully wound for the first time.

The most usual cause of spring breakage is persistent overwinding. Normally, if the spring is well greased, the resistance of the handle will slowly increase until it comes to a clearly defined stop when all the coils are drawn tight around the arbor. If the drum is full of dried graphite grease, this impedes the movement of the spring, making it stiffer to turn. It is thus difficult to assess when it is almost fully wound. (Sometimes the grease is so hard that the spring cannot unwind fully - the motor comes to a halt with the spring still half-wound. - Ed.) The extra strain imposed on the spring by this hardened grease usually leads to breakage, and another way to break a spring is to leave it wound up, or to wind it up fast and furious until you come smack against the end. Always wind the spring with a steady motion, let it run down after use, and keep it well lubricated. (And never wind a spring up if the machine has just been carried from a warm room to a cold one or vice versa - Ed.)

SPRING REPAIRS

Sometimes, it is possible to repair a broken spring and extend its life for some while - it depends on where the break is. More often than not, it is the centre few coils which come adrift, and this is very difficult to repair. This sort of break is usually accompanied by a loud bang, and is confirmed by the lack of any resistance in the winding handle. If you hear a "Brrrrrrr-UMP", it is likely that the outer end has broken off: the noise is caused by the broken end flailing round inside the drum. When you turn the handle, you will feel some resistance at first, but then there will be a click every few turns as the centre coils are taken up and the end flips round. To repair this, if only a few inches are broken off at the outer end, discard the broken piece, bend the end of the spring until it snaps off in a straight line, remove the temper from the new end by heating about six inches to a red heat, and then allow to cool slowly - sudden cooling will make it brittle. Next, drill a $\frac{3}{16}$ " hole near the end, exactly in the centre of the width, and a $\frac{5}{16}$ " one further in but partially overlapping the first hole. This will form a keyhole eye which can slip over the head of the stud. With a hook-end spring, proceed as before but, instead of drilling the holes, bend the end round into a hook with a pair of long-nosed pliers. The loss of a few inches of spring will make little difference to playing time.

(Cont. .

There is one type of failure bearing every resemblance to that of a broken spring, and that is when the inner end of the spring slips off the arbor. Usually, it is the result of repeatedly allowing the gramophone to run right down, so that the flywheel effect of the turntable causes the motor to over-run the fully-unwound position of the spring. This tends to open out the centre coil, which should be a tight fit round the arbor. The cure is simply to remove the arbor and squeeze the coil together with a pair of long-nosed pliers, and always stop the turntable as soon as it begins to slow down.

BUMPS

There is a fairly common phenomenon which I will call the "phantom break". This manifests itself as a 'bump' occurring from time to time during winding or playing. Occasionally it is so violent that it jerks the needle out of the groove. It is caused by hardened grease restraining the spring's movement until it releases with a jerk. If left in this condition, the spring will break sooner or later. Graphite grease is about the dirtiest form of lubricant imaginable, and very difficult to remove once it becomes congealed. I find Vaseline far more effective. If your gramophone starts making ominous noises, therefore, it is wise to take the spring out of its drum, remove all the graphite grease from both spring and drum and then replace them with plenty of Vaseline and some machine oil to soften any remaining traces of graphite (I doubt if anything will soften that stuff! - Ed.)

Now, here comes a stern warning to all aspiring do-it-yourself enthusiasts. Gramophone springs are very powerful and not to be trifled with. If one is allowed to break loose from its drum or retaining ring, it can inflict severe injury or damage. NEVER undo a spring by pulling out the centre coils and hoping for the best. I'll not forget my first attempt at extracting a broken spring: I took it outside and did it inside a wooden box. There was an awful bang and the arbor went through the box and was found half-way down the garden!

However, the task is not difficult once you have the knack: all you need is a firm grip. Start by pulling out the centre coils enough to get your fingers underneath the raised coil and over the remaining ones. Grip firmly and work the drum round with both hands, the spring uncoiling as you go. In replacing the spring, the difficult part is getting the end to hook on to the stud (as mentioned earlier), but once this is done, you reverse the uncoiling process, holding the drum firmly down on the bench as you bend the spring to fit and feed it in. Keep going (do not let go!) until the centre coils slip in of their own accord. Put in plenty of Vaseline and re-assemble the drum in the motor.

Wind up and check that the governor weights are running true - if not, adjust the length of the springs by loosening the securing screws and moving the weights in or out until all revolve in a true circle. Put some Vaseline on all worms and pinions, and oil the bearings and the governor friction pad. Finally, adjust the speed indicator so that it points to 78 when the turntable is revolving at that speed.

One or two points to bear in mind when dismantling motors: Firstly, it is seldom necessary to remove the motor from the motor board. Secondly, watch out for a ball bearing which is often found at the bottom of the turntable spindle: sometimes it is permanently fixed, sometimes it is held by an accumulation of old oil, but sometimes it falls out and gets lost. Thirdly, never ignore washers on the end of arbors: watch out for them when dismantling, note where they come from and replace them when you re-assemble. Otherwise, adjacent wheels may foul each other. (Fourthly, and most important of all, always make sure the spring is completely run down before you start to dismantle the motor. Incidentally, Collaro motors were so designed that any part could be removed without disturbing the rest. - Ed.)

The next, and last, in this series will be a summing up of 'The Case for the Defence'.

Dear Editor,

I am convinced that the Society devotes far too many of its London meetings to record recitals and far too few to the study of machines. Of the twelve meetings planned for the next year, only two are on machines. At one time recitals were called for by Society members, but this is now a thing of the past. New converts to the hobby are usually drawn to it by the machines, not the records that they play. There are other societies that cater for recitals, such as the Recorded Vocal Arts Society.

The objection that is made to machine meetings is that machines are difficult to transport, but surely a portable or small phonograph (a Gem, or one of the open-works type) is not that difficult. There is one member who lives in the country and has no car, but still manages to bring up a fair selection of machines when he puts on a meeting.

I am not trying to say that we should not hold record meetings, of course we should, but I don't think that they should make up a disproportionate amount of the programmes, as they do at the moment.

There are several forms that machine meetings should take. We could have a "Machine" members' night, we could also have advice nights at which the more knowledgeable member (members? - Ed.) of the Society could answer members' questions on machines. There could be "Theme" nights at which a central theme could be chosen and members would bring along machines etc. connected with the theme. Meetings on accessories, literature etc. are also sadly lacking from the programmes.

More informal discussion at meetings would, I think, also be welcomed by members, as we all enjoy talking about the hobby among ourselves.

London N.W.8 December 3rd. 1979

Yours etc. Paul Temple.

The Editor has shown the above letter to the Chairman, who replied as follows:

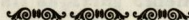
This is a plea that has oft been reiterated by machine-minded members like Mr. Temple, but the trouble is, quite simply, that they never offer to get up and give a programme. When the Committee arrange the meetings, they are not in a position to walk round the supermarket picking off programmes from the shelves as the fancy takes them; rather, they have to beg (well, almost) for programmes, and those who are most willing to oblige tend to be record collectors. One obvious reason is that records are collected in larger numbers (even I, an inveterate collector of machines, must have twenty times as many records as machines). Portability is not as easily dismissed as Mr. Temple suggests: a complete programme of ten records is far more compact than a single portable gramophone, and you could hardly give a whole programme around the latter.

It is true that accessories and literature do not form the subject of programmes,

but it is hard to see how they could: literature is for reading, and accessories for using (e.g. sharpening needles) or displaying - there is not a great deal you can say about them, although certainly some information might be useful. I think it might be better presented as an article in this magazine, however - any offers?

Advice nights sound a good idea - but the trouble here is that you never know if you are going to get enough questions to provide interest for the audience. You look a bit silly with a team of carefully selected 'knowledgeable members' waiting to have questions fired at them, if no one stands up and fires the questions.

Actually, looking at the year's programmes, although there are only two which concentrate on machines, there are one or two others in which, I suspect, machines will play a part, and we should not forget the splendid display of gramophones which John McKeown regularly puts on as a side-show at the A.G.M. - some side-show, as anyone who was at the 1979 A.G.M. will acknowledge, and one that involves a very considerable amount of energetic work beforehand. John can do it because he is in the unique position of living on the premises where the A.G.M. is held - not even the Vice-Chairman (referred to anonymously by Paul Temple) could bring all those cabinets up by Southern Electric!



Two Edison advertising cards of 1903 (from negatives loaned by Sidney Carter)

THE GREAT AMBEROL CONTROVERSY

Part 3 (July 1910)

Sir,

..... With a view to testing the statements of Mr. Seymour regarding alleged complaints of users of Edison machines and Amberols, I approached Messrs. Paskell & Keys. They inform me that they have received no complaints. What has Mr. Seymour to say to this? Again, that queen of sound-reproducing instruments, the Amberola, is fitted with a larger diaphragm (again corrugated copper) than usual, which of course necessitates a heavier balance-weight, and it is the Amberol record that the National Co. have considered durable enough to justify such an action. Furthermore, I myself pay 4s. for G.O. records (which are honestly worth three times as much.).....

Another statement of Mr. H.S. tells us that friction increases with speed. The actual facts are that friction falls off as the speed increases. For a proof of the general soundness of this reply, I refer him to a good text-book on "Applied Mechanics".....

Yours, etc., Adrian F. Sykes.

Dear Sir,

I am interested in the letters re the Amberol controversy. I am the owner of over 100 of these most excellent records and can safely assert that, for volume, expression and tonality, they are much superior to the ordinary cylinder. I am not an expert in matters phonographic, therefore my opinion is quite unbiased, but I quite agree with Mr. Sykes in his opinions. Mr. Seymour seems very sceptical about the wear of Amberols, but I think his fears are quite unjustified. We have it on the authority of the National Phonograph Co. that the Amberols lose nothing by the finer cut, and, in my opinion, they are the best judges in the matter, for they have nothing to gain in making wrong assertions. J.H. asks why were not 200 thread records exploited before? I should say because no suitable composition had been discovered. We are told that it took Edison himself two years to perfect the Amberol composition. A fault I have found in Amberols is the amount of surface noise in some of the earlier numbers, especially William Tell Overture. This is quite an objection and I hope the selection will be re-issued, preferably on two records. With regard to the vexed question of diaphragms, I think all phonoists will give the palm to the corrugated copper now used by the Edison Co. In conclusion, I hope Mr. A.F. Sykes, that doughty Amberol champion, will by force of argument and weight of fact induce Mr. H. Seymour to take a better view with regard to the Amberol, and I would beg leave to add that theories are often upset in practice.

Yours, etc., W.C.W.,
Bagshot.

Dear Sir,

..... The right shape of stylus in my estimation would be a counterpart of a recording sapphire, but this would, of course, tear the records up. However, no doubt Mr. Sykes has examined the stylus in Murdoch's reproducer for the Indestructible records; if so, he will notice that this bears a striking resemblance to a recording stylus, but the sharp edge has been slightly rounded off. That the National Co. know what is best I have not the slightest doubt, but surely also the Indestructible people know what they are doing. Mr. Seymour seems a trifle too theoretical for me, and if he would only give us some more practical facts I am sure they would be more convincing. Mr. Sykes wrote me personally a little while ago, and amongst other things asked me to lend him my best Model C for comparison with his. This I have offered to do under certain conditions which are as follow-

ows:-

That the reproducer be used on an Edison Home with a 37in. by 22in brass horn, the reason being that the speaker arms of different machines vary as to angle, and I find that my Model C's do not give the best results on Standards etc., neither will they work satisfactorily on the 'Era' and 'Homestead' types of Edison Bell machines. Then as regards the horn, I have adapted my C's to work with the large brass horn of the dimensions given above, and although they give good results with nearly any horn, the best are with the horn mentioned. A 56in or a 42in are not so good. This applies also to the Seymour repro. A small horn such as the Cygnet is too blatant, whereas a large horn tones down and reproduces more melodiously. In reference to the swivelling arrangements I do not follow Mr. Sykes' remarks in the current issue. He says, 'Imagine a slight rotation to be given to both (i.e., elliptical and button) in their respective tracks. In the case of the button no increased stress is caused in the walls of the track, but with the wedge-shaped H sapphire it is far different. Here the stylus tends to leave the bottom, reducing the bearing area to a very large extent, and hence enormously increasing the stress. This causes the powder complained of by users of floating reproducers.' Now all this is very interesting, but certainly not convincing. All floating repros. I have seen (and their name is legion) have been fitted with a ball sapphire, whereas the button used in the Model H is nearly always covered with powder after one, two or three reproductions. Why does Mr. Sykes refer to the H stylus as wedge-shaped? It is surely a button put sideways, and even then the shank is not parallel with the record, but it is slightly tipped up, so that the engaging portion of the stylus with the record is not in perfect alignment with the track, but slightly across it, which, I should say, would tend to increase the wear of the record.

Yours., etc., Linzey A. Willcox
Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Dear Sir,

I should like to answer Mr. Sykes' letter which appeared in the June issue. That gentleman is wrong if he thinks I use only the one kind of record: I use both. And it is for that reason that I can say that the Amberol is wanting as regards volume and wear but I will say the Amberol has improved wonderfully of late. I challenge any user to show me a record that will wear like the old black record issued five or six years ago. It was not, perhaps, so loud or so clear as the later type, but it wants some beating for wear. I should like to ask a question: If Amberols do not wear, why is it that, when played on an Edison machine with the repro. (H) fitted exactly as it left the factory, and played at the correct speed, it gives off a fine dust; and what are those fine white lines I see on the record? Is that wear, or is it only an optical illusion? I have been to the Microphograph Co. and heard both records played with the Seymour repro, and I took my Edison repros. with me and heard them tested with the Seymour, and it certainly put my repros. in the shade. Both for volume and clearness the Seymour repros. are the best, and after owning a machine for the last 12 or 14 years I would not say that if it was not so. Then I went from there to my dealer's, and heard the two makes of record played over with a combination repro., and the difference was more marked there than at Goswell Road. I have heard the new Cygnet trumpet. It is very nice, but I think I like my 56in. brass one better, but that is according to my taste. Of course it doesn't follow because you agree with a person in one thing that you do in all.

Yours truly, J.H.
Regent's Park.

To the Editor,
HILLANDALE NEWS

Sevenoaks, Kent
6th Jan. 1980

Dear Mr. Proudfoot,

May I add a few words to Frank Andrews' excellent article on the Gramophones Over the Atlantic carried in 1919 by the airship R-34, particularly referring to Thomas Edison's presentation of an Army and Navy model Disc Phonograph. A first-class illustrated article on these machines appeared in the now-defunct Journal of the American Phonograph Society for October 1975 by Art Wilmoth, and may I offer some extra material from my endeavours towards one day getting a book together on the Edison disc phonographs.

Shortly after America entered the War on April 6th 1917, the Edison Company received a request for machine prices from the U.S. Army Department Quartermaster in New York, to which the Company responded by offering the A-100 disc model and Amberola 50 cylinder machine. Both of these were hopelessly overpriced against those of their lateral-cut competitors, but the Company had second thoughts by specifying "A Special Model for the Army" to be built. This was a robust table model disc phonograph with A-100 motor and large Laboratory Model horn, and in final details of May 29th 1917 was called "The Army and Navy Phonograph". Those for the Army were painted khaki, and the Navy had blue ones; each cost \$38.17 to make and sold at \$60. None was sold through government outlets but direct to units and welfare bodies. The case was 23½in. high, 19½in. wide and 22½in. deep.

Quite naturally the Edison Company was always looking for publicity, and saw the arrival of the R-34 in the district as a truly Heaven-sent opportunity, if ever there was one. However, the dirigible had had engine and temperature problems on the way west, and arrived with only 140 gallons of petrol on board. On departure four days later a case of rum was the last thing thrown through the control car window to sustain the engineers working on the five open engines; in fact only two of the five still functioned by the time the R-34 arrived back in Norfolk.

Are we to believe that Major Scott allowed a 100lb. Edison phonograph, plus fifty records at 1lb. apiece, to jeopardise his chances of reaching home on an important flag-showing flight? My bet is that it and the records were quietly left in Long Island and that we have small chance of unearthing the now rare Army and Navy Phonograph in the United Kingdom.

Production of this model stopped as soon as the Armistice was signed in 1918, and no doubt the gift machine was from surplus stock.

Yours sincerely,

George Frow.

BOOK REVIEWS

Rainer E. Lotz: GRAMMOPHONPLATTEN AUS DER RAGTIME-ÄRA

This delightful little book shows eighty-nine record labels, illustrated in full colour. All were manufactured in Germany, many for Great Britain and other export markets, and nearly all carry ragtime music. Each label is given a page to itself, with a transcript of the printed information on both sides of the record on the opposite page. The only additional information normally given is a probable date and place of origin. Visually, the effect is very pleasing, but the absence of more information is at times tantalising with so much blank paper on each page. For example, I would have liked to know exactly when Polyphon records were re-named Pilot (both are shown, the Polyphon carrying a small red sticker announcing the impending change), and wondered why the associate Klingsor label was not shown.

As an appendix, there is a short history, covering firstly sound recording in general, then label designs and finally the music. As this is all in German, in which I am far from fluent, I cannot as yet comment upon it in detail, but there is certainly some interesting background information there. I did notice, however, that the Bells and Tainter were not even mentioned in the early history, and it was implied that the large sized Pathé discs were designed to increase playing time, which of course was not the case - their raison d'être was that of the Concert cylinders.

The book is well printed on good quality paper, and is paper-backed, but in a traditional, restrained style not often found in this country, where paper-backs were hardly known until the advent of Penguins in the 1930s. It is one of a series known as Die bibliophilen Taschenbücher and costs 16,80 DM. The publishers are Harenberg Kommunikation, Westfalendamm 67, Postfach 1305, 4600 Dortmund 1, Germany. It is hoped that copies will in due course be available from the Society, possibly with a translation of the text.

VAN MUZIEKDOOS....TOT GRAMMOFOON - Catalogue of the De Caluwé collection at the Stedelijk Museum, Sint-Niklaas, Holland

Another offering from the Continent, this time written in Dutch: but, as with the German book, you do not need to know the language to understand the pictures. Although the collection covers all forms of mechanical music, by far the greater part is given to gramophones and phonographs, and all are beautifully illustrated, one or two in colour. The presentation leaves nothing to be desired, and one wishes that E.M.I. had gone to town in similar fashion on Ernie Bayly's catalogue of their collection. The text is much briefer, however, being aimed clearly at the general public rather than the collector, and a few of the attributions are open to question, as Mr. de Caluwé himself admits. Nonetheless, this is a volume that every machine collector will want to have on his bookshelves, and we hope to have a few in stock for members 'ere long: I expect the post paid price to be in the region of £5.

C.P.



Grammophon!



Stärkster Ton ***

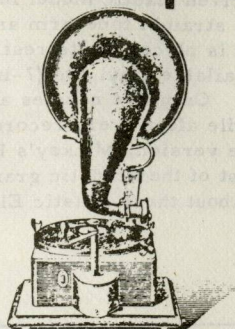
Lautester Ton ***

Natürlichster Ton

Chatullen.

Harte Platten, keine

Deutsche Grammophon-Actien-Gesellschaft, Berlin S. 42.



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**Apotheker Schmidt's
Abschleiftinktur**

ist unerreicht!

Zu haben bei der Germania Phonographen
Compagnie, Berlin C., Stralauerstr. 56.

These advertisements ap-
peared in Germany in 1901.
The machine at the top re-
quires no introduction, but
the obvious slogan 'Hard
Plates, no Wax Cylinders'
is surprisingly unfamiliar.

I have never come across
a Schilling's phonograph, a
variation on the well-
known 'Puck' theme, com-
plete with adjustable foot
to keep the stylus on the
record. The reproducer
is probably of ebonite like
those of early wax-cylin-
der Graphophones.

Abschleiftinktur I assume
to have been a wax solvent
for eradicating recordings
in the absence of a shaving
device.

The acoustic gramophone is not totally a thing of the past. The Swansea firm of Louis Marks make a small, battery-driven plastic model for children, which plays 78s acoustically with steel needles. It has a straight tone-arm and an aluminium diaphragm. It stops automatically when the soundbox is placed on its rest. The soundbox cannot be removed from the tone-arm. A list of available vinyl 78s (7-inch) is included; they are all juvenile in subject, nursery rhymes etc. Only five needles are included, so the manufacturers do not expect you to change the needle after every record. It sells under the name My Record Player, or, in the Mickey Mouse version, Mickey's Record Player. It's no E. M. G. or Re-entrant, but it is possibly the last of the acoustic gramophones.

(I wonder if Jim Goodall knows about these Plastic Electric Acoustics? - Ed.)

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